

REASONS WHY BROOKLYN ¹⁵XX

With the Compliments
of ✓
REASONS WHY BROOKLYN

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SHOULD HAVE A

SPECIAL HOSPITAL AND DISPENSARY

FOR



Nervous and Mental Disease.

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Not the least beneficent tendency of modern charity is that toward the specialization of hospitals. Medical science has grown to be such a vast collection of facts, that it has become impossible for any one mind to thoroughly master them all, and make the utmost possible skillful artistic application of them; hence the growth of specialties and special hospitals. Thus, the city of New York, the medical centre of the United States, has two hospitals for the treatment of diseases of the eye and ear, two for the treatment of skin and cancer affections, two for the treatment of deformities, one for throat diseases, and the Woman's Hospital, of world-wide reputation; beside the special county hospitals.

Nor is Brooklyn deficient in this respect. It has its complete Eye and Ear Hospital, its Hospital for Consumptives, and St. Mary's Hospital, which is divided into special departments.

New York and Brooklyn probably lead the cities of the United States in their provision for the special treatment of disease. Yet not only throughout the United States, but even in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, there is not a single special hospital for the treatment of nervous and mental disease,



of such general accessibility and thorough equipment as are those other special ones that have just been enumerated. There are here and there special dispensary classes to be sure ; and there is, here and there, a special ward in a hospital, or a private and expensive home for nervous disease, and there are also plenty of lunatic asylums ; but there is not a single completely furnished hospital, situated in the heart of a large city population, easily accessible, prepared to treat with all modern appliances, such forms of this class of disease as but temporarily interrupt the occupations of patients, and prepared to do this for the poor. Startling as this fact may be, the explanation is not far to seek. The study of nervous and mental disease is the latest of all the specialties, the main investigations being, even at this time, conducted in Europe, and the most important works upon it being in foreign languages. The importance and frequency of those maladies have, therefore, been overlooked by the public and even by physicians. To ascertain what the relative death-rate is we have obtained a large mass of vital statistics, having been greatly aided by the courtesy of Drs. Raymond and Wyckoff, of the Brooklyn Board of Health ; Dr. Baker, of the Michigan State Board of Health ; J. W. Guiteau, Esq., of the Equitable Life Insurance Co., and Dr. H. B. Tuck, of the New York Life Insurance Co.

The total death-rate of Brooklyn for 19 years (1848 to 1860, inclusive, and 1871 to 1876, inclusive),* from all diseases was 116,910. Of these, 21,370 were cases of death from diseases of the nervous system. Deaths from accidents befalling the nervous centres, and deaths not directly due to nervous diseases, are not included.

The death-rate in the city of Brooklyn from nervous and mental disease may, therefore, fairly be said to be 19.43 per cent.

* These were the only years of which the records were in shape to be easily analyzed.

If the deaths be computed that have occurred from diseases both directly and indirectly affecting the nervous system (as convulsions after childbirth, for instance) and from casualties implicating the nervous centres, they will number 22,882 for the same period of time, and it can be affirmed that :

The death-rate from diseases and casualties directly and indirectly affecting the nervous system is 20.81 per cent. in the city of Brooklyn.

It is well known that those who desire to insure their lives are subjected to a rigid examination by the best medical talent, and that every precaution known to physicians and business men is taken to guard against the possibility of insuring an unhealthy person. It may also be said, that those who carry insurances upon their lives are of the most industrious, provident, and intelligent of the community. Such individuals may therefore be regarded as the best human products of the community—as the very fittest for survival. Yet in this select stock nervous disease is the most frequent cause of death, or next to the most frequent, as the following figures will show:—

Name of Company.	Total No. of Deaths.	Percentage of Deaths from Nerv. Dis.	
N. Y. Equitable ¹	2,192	18.80	{ Nerv. Dis. most frequent. Percentage of constitutional dis. being 18.54. { Constitutional diseases—Consumption, cancers, dropsy—alone surpass Nerv. Dis., their percentage being 20.10. { Zymotic diseases alone exceed, percentage being 19.40. { Respiratory disease was more frequent, percentage being 31.81. { Respiratory diseases only exceed, percentage being 19.90. { Nerv. Dis. most frequent.
N. Y. Mutual ²	3,182	17.80	
Scottish Amicable Society ³	773	16.81	
New England Mutual ⁴	247	17.81	
Gresham Life ⁵	206	17.47	
Gotha Life Assur. Bank ⁶	17.01	

¹ Pamphlet issued by the N. Y. Equitable Life.

² Ibid.

³ The Insurance Cyclopædia, London, 1873, Vol. II., p. 205.

⁴ Ibid., p. 209.

⁵ Ibid., p. 345.

⁶ Ibid., p. 369.

Mr. James Meikle, analyzing the deaths among the Scotch insurance companies from 1815 to 1863, came to the conclusion that insured lives die in larger proportions than the population from, firstly, zymotic disease; secondly, diseases of the brain and nervous system.*

According to an analysis made by Dr. Althaus† of the deaths reported by the Registrar-General of England and Wales, during the years from 1838 to 1871, "diseases of the nervous system occupy the fourth rank amongst the maladies destructive of human life, being only surpassed in fatality by zymotic, tubercular, and respiratory diseases."

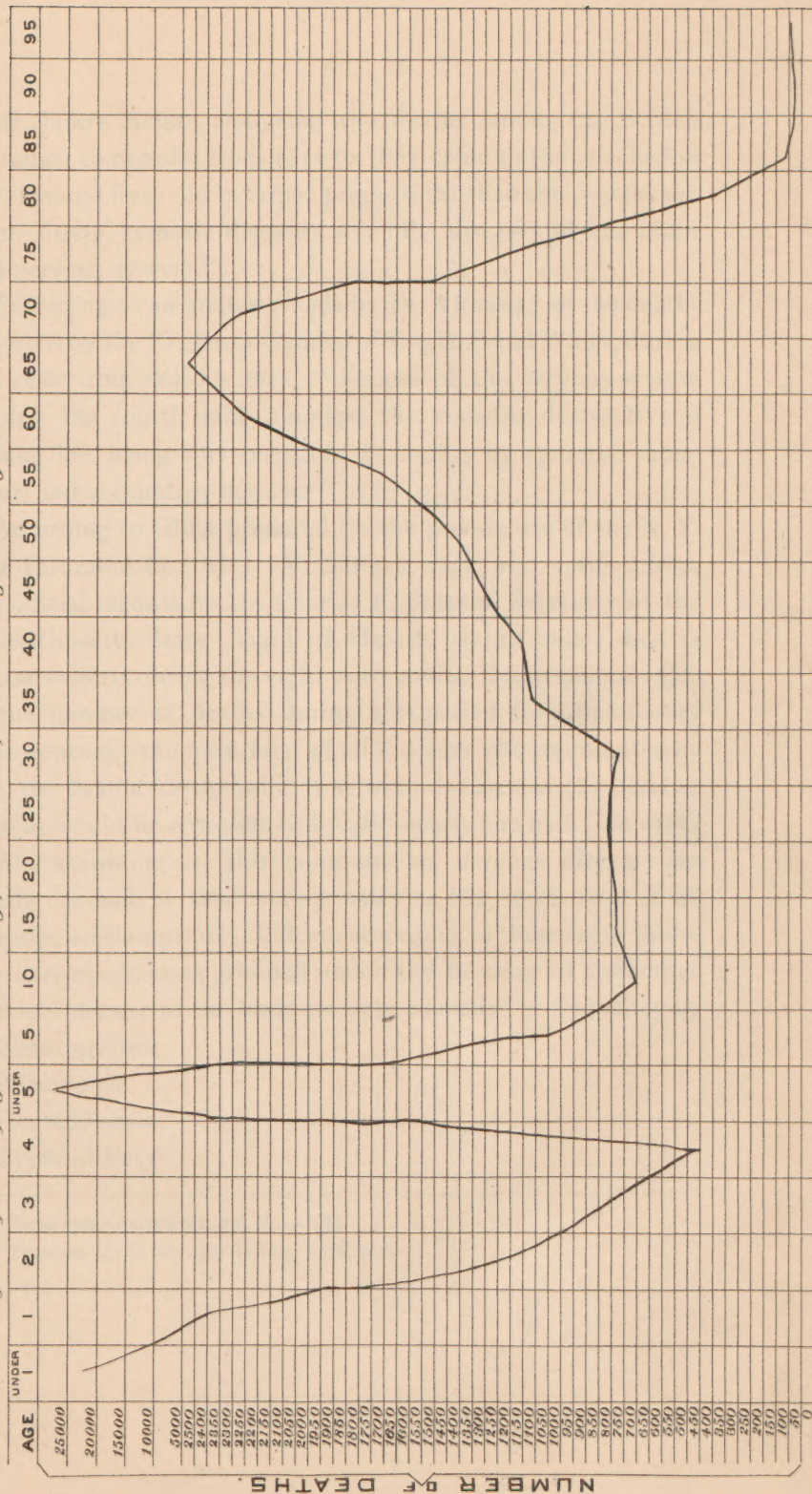
According to tables prepared for the private use of the N. Y. Life Insurance Co., by J. W. Guiteau, Esq., and verified from the official records by Dr. Charles F. Folsom, Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Health, 59,512 males died in Massachusetts during the eight years ending December 31, 1878. If the number of deaths during this period from pulmonary consumption—the most fatal of all diseases—be represented by 100, the deaths for the same time from diseases of the nervous system would be represented by 46—nearly one-half. In other words, according to this computation, nervous diseases are nearly one-half as fatal among males as the most fatal of all diseases, consumption. Indeed, according to these same tables the nervous diseases grouped under the heading of inflammation and disease of the brain are only exceeded in frequency by

Consumption,
Pneumonia,
Heart-Disease,
Typhoid Fever.

* Insurance Cyclopædia, vol. ii., p. 325.

† Diseases of the Nervous System, 1878, p. 8.

DIAGRAM, Showing the Influence of Age on the Mortality from Diseases of the Nervous System in England and Wales in 1847.



And exceed in frequency the deaths from

Dropsy,
 Bright's Disease,
 Cancer,
 Drowning,
 Self-Destruction,
 Liver-Disease,
 Small-pox,
 Kidney Disease,
 Railroad Accidents,
 Rheumatism,
 Inflammation of the Bowels,
 Erysipelas,
 Dysentery,
 Diarrhœa,
 Cancer of the Stomach,
 Asthma,
 Cholera,
 Inflammation of the Stomach,
 Pleurisy,
 Diphtheria, and many minor diseases and casualties.

Not only do deaths from nervous disease occur most frequently among the industrious and healthy, as the experience of the Life Insurance Companies would seem to demonstrate, but they also occur with increasing frequency during the most active years of life, as will be seen from the following diagram, in which the curve of frequency begins to rise between the 25th and 30th years, and continues to rise to 70.*

Nervous diseases vary but little from year to year in frequency, being among the most constant of all maladies. This is demonstrated by the following table, prepared by Dr. W. A.

* Althaus, *supra cit*, p. 17.

Gay, Cantab.,* in which the rate of fluctuation is expressed in round numbers most nearly approximating to the true figures :

Cause of Death.	Fluctuation.	Cause of Death.	Fluctuation.
1. Cholera	168	13. Thrush.....	11
2. Influenza	79	14. Inflammation of Lungs..	10
3. Small Pox	50	15. Croup.....	10
4. Scarletina.....	47	16. Scrofula.....	10
5. Diarrhoea.....	32	17. Tabes Mesenterica	8
6. Hooping Cough	32	18. Paralysis	6
7. Measles	31	19. Convulsions.....	6
8. Typhus Fever.....	19	20. Water on the Brain	6
9. Erysipelas	17	21. Pulmonary Consumption.	6
10. Asthma	16	22. Apoplexy	6
11. Bronchitis	13	23. Inflammation of Brain...	5
12. Epilepsy.....	12	24. Cancer	4

These are the figures relating to the death-rate. What the prevalence is of non-fatal nervous diseases we have no means of precisely estimating. It is an undeniable proposition that more people suffer from any given disease than die from it ; and in many instances the prevalence is enormously greater than the fatality. During the nineteen years of Brooklyn's vitality statistics, for instance, to which allusion has been made, there were hardly a couple of dozen deaths from diseases of the eye and ear. Yet the Brooklyn Eye and Ear Hospital treated 4,697 patients during the year 1883. Estimating the average mortality from nervous diseases to be 19 per cent., and knowing that the mortality from them ranks next to that from zymotic, tubercular and respiratory disease, we may safely, perhaps too modestly, affirm that nervous diseases are only surpassed in prevalence by these three classes of maladies. It is, then, the more startling that, whilst every city in the country has one or more hospitals for the reception of these three classes, there is not one in the land for the adequate reception of the next most frequent class.

* Insurance Cyclop., vol. ii., p. 313.

The following conclusions are therefore justifiable:

1. The death-rate from nervous and mental disease in the city of Brooklyn is about 19 per cent.
 2. Nervous and mental diseases probably rank next in prevalence to zymotic, tubercular and respiratory diseases.
 3. Diseases of the nervous system are either the most frequent cause of death, or the second most frequent cause, among the most robust and industrious classes of the community.
 4. Nervous disease is probably, therefore, most prevalent in this class of individuals.
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These are the reasons why Brooklyn should have a Special Hospital and Dispensary for Nervous and Mental Disease.

